

tus could only be utilized for cutting sheets to pre-determined sizes and in a straight line. For cutting sheet material, whether it be paper or cloth, etc., in other than a straight line, the craftsman would be required to use scissors or shears for a free-hand, non-linear cutting procedure.

The foregoing and related objects are achieved by the apparatus of the present invention for cutting sheet material, which includes a freely movable unit having a lower part defining a sheet support surface for placement of a piece of sheet material, and an upper part defining an upper surface and disposed above said lower part with a gap existing between said upper part and said lower part for receiving the piece of sheet material. A cutting blade is secured in the upper and lower parts, and extends across said gap. The sheet support surface and the upper surface extend to either side of the cutting blade. Pressure means is mounted on the upper part in the gap for bearing on the piece of sheet material supported by the lower part adjacent to the cutting blade, so that the piece of sheet material is able to be inserted between the pressure means and the sheet support surface for tensioning the piece of sheet material in the vicinity of the cutting blade.

As will be explained in greater detail hereinafter, nowhere in the prior art is such a novel and efficient apparatus for cutting sheet material in a non-linear manner

either disclosed or suggested.

By the present amendments, Applicant has provided an Abstract for the instant patent application, as required by the Examiner and in conformance with 37 C.F.R. §1.72(b), on a separate sheet of paper. Additionally, Applicant has amended the disclosure in order to include standard U.S. sectional headings, as well as to attend to the informalities raised by the Examiner in the first Office Action. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments now being entered to the Specification overcome, or otherwise render moot, the bases of the Examiner's objection to the disclosure, as presented in Paragraph No. 3 of the first Office Action.

With respect to the claims, Applicant has cancelled prior Claims 6-19, and has substituted therefor new Claims 20-24, in order to further clarify the novel features of the present invention. Claim 20 now represents the single independent claim pending in the present application.

New Claims 20-24 reword, or otherwise avoid, the language of the original sets of claims which the Examiner held to be indefinite. In light of the presentation of new Claims 20-24, Applicant respectfully contends that the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, indefiniteness rejection of prior Claims 6-19 has been overcome and should now be withdrawn.

The newly entered claims, i.e., Claims 20-24, do not include the features of prior Claims 12, 13 and 19 and, consequently, Applicant submits that the Examiner's drawing objection, issued pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a), on the ground that features of Claims 12, 13 and 19 were not illustrated in the drawing figures, is now submitted to be moot.

Turning now, in detail, to an analysis of the Examiner's prior art rejections of Applicant's claims, in the first Office Action the Examiner has rejected the subject matter of original Claims 6-9 and 13-16 as being anticipated, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b), by Chuang, U.S. Patent No. 4,960,022. In the anticipation rejection, it is the Examiner's contention that Chuang discloses a plastic film cutter comprising all of the elements recited in the enumerated claims under rejection, including a lower part, an upper part, a gap therebetween, a cutting blade, means for exerting pressure and a holder.

In reply to the Examiner's anticipation rejection applying Chuang, Applicant respectfully contends that Chuang discloses a plastic film cutter, which is actually a rail guided cutter and which cannot be considered "a freely movable unit," as now being expressly claimed by Applicant. The Abstract in Chuang confirms this by stating that the plastic film cutter therein includes "a supporting board with its two

sides provided with a plurality of clamping plates, a sliding furrow is formed upon the top of the supporting board for supporting the lower sliding seat of the slidable cutting means"

In light of the fact that Chuang discloses a plastic film cutter having a rail-guided cutter, while the sheet material cutter of the presently claimed invention is a freely movable unit, Applicant respectfully contends that Chuang cannot reasonably be seen as either anticipating, or rendering obvious, the present invention, as now being claimed. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. §102(b) anticipation rejection of the first Office Action is submitted to have been overcome and should now be appropriately withdrawn.

In a separate rejection, the Examiner has rejected the subject matter of prior Claims 6-9, 11-16, 18 and 19 as being obvious, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a), over Li, U.S. Patent No. 5,638,603, taken in view of Campbell, Jr., U.S. Patent No. 3,068,569. In this obviousness rejection, it is the Examiner's contention that the primary reference of Li discloses Applicant's invention, substantially as claimed, including upper and lower parts, a gap therebetween, a cutting blade and a blade holder. The Examiner, however, does concede that the Li cutter fails to include means for exerting pressure, as is included in the present Applicant's

invention. The Examiner has, therefore, secondarily-applied Campbell, Jr. for its contended teaching of a cutter having means for exerting pressure via a roller (17) disposed immediately in front of a cutting blade (14) for the purpose of placing the sheet material to be cut under tension. The Examiner has, therefore, concluded that it would have been obvious to have provided the device of Li with the means for exerting pressure, as taught by Campbell, Jr., in order to facilitate an enhanced tensioning of the sheet material during cutting.

In reply to the Examiner's primary obviousness rejection as set forth above, Li discloses a "wrappage" cutter and, to the extent that "wrappage" is not the same as a sheet material, the Li cutting apparatus cannot be seen as being applicable for the same type of cutting material as is the present invention. More particularly, the article in Li, according to the disclosure in the applied reference, is intended for cutting "a roll wrappage parallel to an edge thereof." (Li, Col. 1, lines 34-37) Thus, Li is intended for cutting wrapping off of a roll in a manner which is parallel to an edge thereof, and which implies that a straight cut is intended. The present invention, by contrast, is constructed for permitting an accurate non-linear cutting of sheet material. As a result, it cannot properly be said that the primary-applied reference of Li discloses substantially the same invention as claimed by

Applicant, but for the lack of pressure exerting means. The lack of pressure exerting means in Li results from the substantially different nature of cutting that takes place in Li over that which is accomplished by the presently claimed cutting invention.

As for the secondarily-applied reference of Campbell, Jr., this citation discloses a letter opener and is respectfully contended to have little in common with the present invention. While it is true that the article in Campbell, Jr. "cuts" an envelope to open it, the letter opener in Campbell, Jr. cannot be used for cutting sheet material, offered either straight for the cutting article or off of a roll.

As for the pressure exerting means disclosed by Campbell, Jr., the letter opener therein uses guide wheels for guiding an envelope to a blade. These guide wheels bear sideways (or horizontally) on the envelope and cannot be viewed as "bearing on" the envelope as the presently claimed invention would be "bearing on" the surface of a piece of sheet material.

Consequently, Campbell, Jr. employs pressure exerting means as a guiding device for retaining envelopes by the application of pressure along the sides thereof, rather than upon the planar surface of the envelope. These pressure exerting means are substantially different from the pressure means of the instantly claimed invention, in part, because

the article disclosed by Campbell, Jr. is not intended to be cutting sheet material, but opening an envelope in a sideways cut.

It is, therefore, respectfully contended that modifying Li by conceptually incorporating the pressure exerting means of Campbell, Jr., would still fail to yield the sheet material cutting apparatus of that which Applicant is now claiming. Thus, withdrawal of the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. §103(a) obviousness rejection, applying Li, taken in view of Campbell, Jr., is respectfully requested.

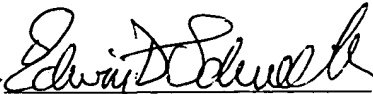
Concerning, finally, the remaining references made of record by the Examiner, but not applied in any rejection of Applicant's claims, such additional art references have been carefully considered, but are not believed to adversely affect the patentability of the present invention, as now claimed.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully contended that all claims now pending in the above-identified patent application (i.e., Claims 20-24) recite a novel and efficient apparatus for cutting sheet material in a non-linear manner, which is patentably distinguishable over the prior art. Accordingly, withdrawal of the outstanding objections and

rejections and the allowance of all claims now pending are respectfully requested and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enc.: Substitute Abstract of the Disclosure.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the Deposit Account of Applicant's Attorney, Account No. 19-0450, for any additional fees which may be due in connection with the prosecution of the present application, but which have not otherwise been provided for.